



Swords Educate Together National School

Roll Number 20145 O

Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale and Aims

The aim of this Healthy Eating Policy is to help our school community, children, staff and parents develop positive and responsible attitudes to food and nutrition and to appreciate the benefits that healthy food and drink habits make to overall health and wellbeing.

In conjunction with the curriculum subjects SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education), Science and the Learn Together Programme, we aim to promote nutrition awareness and positively effect healthy food and drink choices within the school community.

Healthy Eating in SETNS

- The Revised Food Pyramid (2017) is the key tool to communicate healthy eating messages.



- It is very important for children's energy and concentration levels that they eat a healthy breakfast before coming to school.
- A healthy lunchbox includes a piece of food from each of the first four shelves of the food pyramid.
- Foods from shelf 1: fruit and vegetables (vitamin/mineral rich) and shelf 2: carbohydrates (energy) are especially encouraged (to ensure recommended daily portions are met).
- Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day during class time in a non-spill nipple top bottle.
- The revised Food Pyramid separates the Top Shelf from the rest of the pyramid. The Top Shelf includes foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt. These are actively discouraged during school hours and after school classes held on site. Very small amounts once or twice a week maximum is sufficient.

- However, as voted by parents, children may bring a small top shelf food item on Friday, or last day of each term, or on special occasions authorised by the Principal and Senior Management Team and on a school tour.

Examples of Healthier Snack Options:

Extra piece of fruit	Unsalted crackers	Sugar-free jelly pots
Washed, raw vegetable pieces	Crispbreads	Natural or low fat yoghurt
Plain breadsticks	Plain rice cakes	Sugar-free stewed fruit

- Children will normally have two food breaks during the day and will be given adequate time to eat.
- Nuts and nut products (including peanut butter and chocolate spread), crisps, popcorn, fizzy drinks, sweets and chewing gum are not permitted.
- Staff will support the healthy eating policy and will not offer sweets to children as rewards or prizes.
- In the interest of fairness and for allergy or religious (as well as health) reasons, cakes, buns or treats (sweets and chocolate) for birthday celebrations will not be distributed.
- In support of our Green School Initiative, we encourage reusable airtight lunch containers and all waste materials are brought home. Remember our Green Code S.W.O.R.D.S.- Simple Wrappings on Really Delicious Sandwiches.

Suitable Drinks for Children

- Drinks should always be included in a packed lunch. Extra water should be included on PE days and in warmer weather.
- Water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children.
- Unsweetened fruit juices, "tooth kind" drinks, flavoured milks, smoothies, yoghurt drinks and "no added sugar" dilutable squash should be consumed with meals to help prevent dental health problems.

Drink	Tooth Friendly
Water	Any time 
Milk	Any time 
Unsweetened fruit juice	At mealtimes 
Diluted sugar-free squash	At mealtimes 
Fruit juice drink (unsweetened)	At mealtimes 
Flavoured milk	At mealtimes 
Yoghurt or milk drinks	At mealtimes 
Smoothies	At mealtimes 
Fruit juice drink (sweetened)	Not tooth friendly 
Fizzy drinks (including diet versions)	Not tooth friendly 

Traffic Light Checklist from www.safefood.eu

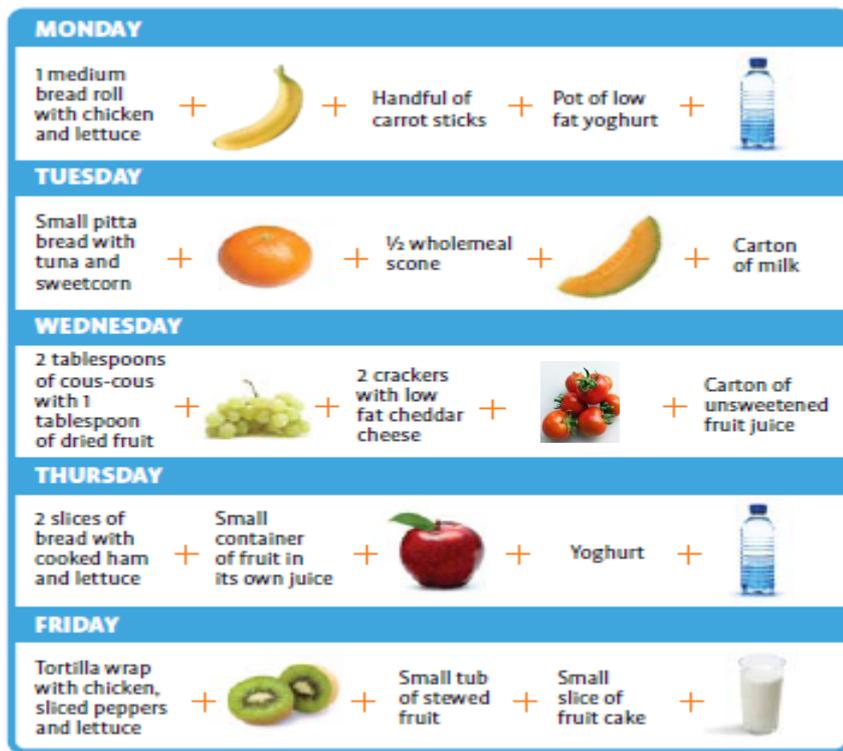
Safefood is an all-island implementation body set up under the British-Irish Agreement with a general remit to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and nutrition issues on the island of Ireland.

Education Measures

- Within SPHE, Science and/or the Learn Together programme, all children will receive appropriate lessons on healthy eating.
- Parents / guardians of incoming junior infant children and new children to the school will be informed about the Healthy Eating Policy.

Resources

- www.healthyreland.ie/ Great information on new food pyramid, suggested meal plans and fact sheets
- www.safefood.eu Great ideas for the daily lunch box
- www.enjoyhealthyeating.info/



Sample 5-day lunchbox planner from Safefood - Healthy Lunchboxes

Other Tips and Hints

- Keep lunches in fridge if made the night before
- Use a small insulated cool bag especially in warmer weather
- Cut sandwiches into small manageable portions especially for younger children
- Peel fruit for younger children
- Avoid items that children cannot eat without assistance
- Try to give a variety of foods
- Vary the types of bread (wholemeal, granary, high fibre rolls, bagels, pitta and sliced bread)

Review and Evaluation

- This policy revises the previous Healthy Eating Policy reviewed in 2016.
- The revised food pyramid 2017 is the key tool in communicating healthy eating messages.
- Parent survey November 2017: 49% happy to remove Friday top shelf item, 51% happy to keep it.
- Advice, consultation and training was received from HSE Community Dietitians.
- The policy was reviewed and approved by children (Student Council), Parents (PTA), Staff and the Board of Management.
- We appreciate that encouraging children to choose certain foods is not always easy. However, with the increase in obesity, type 2 diabetes and the prevalence of dental caries, we are encouraging best practice especially during school hours and after school activities held on site. For this policy to be successful, we need support from the whole school community.
- This policy will be reviewed as and when deemed necessary.

Reviewed:.....(date)

Chairperson, Board of Management